

## Early Literacy Initiative

# Building a New Generation of Readers

### The Need:

- 📖 According to the 1991 Carnegie Foundation report, *Ready to Learn, A Mandate for the Nation*, 35% of children in the United States enter public schools with such low levels of skills and motivation that they are at substantial risk for early academic difficulties.
- 📖 "Disparities in children's academic skills are substantial on their first day of formal schooling, so solutions that focus only on the school setting come too late to have as much impact as we would hope to achieve." (*Inequality at the Starting Gate 2002* from the Economic Policy Institute)
- 📖 The typical middle-class child enters first grade with 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading, whereas a child from a low-income family averages just 25 hours.
- 📖 47% of public-aid parents report no alphabet books in the home, in contrast with only 3% of professional parents reporting the absence of such books.

Source:

[www.ala.org/ala/pla/plaissues/earlylit/researchandeval/researchevaluation.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/pla/plaissues/earlylit/researchandeval/researchevaluation.htm)

### Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Record's Response:

- 📖 *Building a New Generation of Readers*, a statewide early literacy project designed by the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records, provides public and school librarians with the tools and materials to teach parents and childcare providers strategies for preparing children to come to school ready to read.
- 📖 The Arizona State Library supplies libraries with *Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library* materials that are based on current federally funded research and have been evaluated and found to have significant influence on the early literacy behaviors of parents and childcare providers. For more information on *Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library*, see the article on the back.

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### Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records

GladysAnn Wells, State Librarian

Library Development Division  
Holly Henley, Project Manager  
1100 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2935  
Phone: 602-542-5841  
AZ toll-free: 1-800-255-5841  
Fax: 602-364-2257  
E-mail: [hhenley@lib.az.us](mailto:hhenley@lib.az.us)



# Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library®

Elaine Meyers and Harriet Henderson

Public Library Association and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development produce early literacy materials

The Public Library Association's (PLA's) Early Literacy Project began in 2000 with a partnership with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), a division of the National Institutes of Health. NICHD had just released the National Reading Panel's report, providing research-based findings concerning reading development in America's children. The report, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*, had information useful to parents, child care providers and public librarians.

A significant aspect of the partnership was to develop model public library programs incorporating this research. Public libraries have the ability to reach thousands of parents, caregivers and children and to greatly impact the early reading experiences of preschool children. PLA contracted with Dr. Grover C. Whitehurst and Dr. Christopher Lonigan, well-known researchers in emergent literacy, to develop a model program for parents and caregivers. The premise of these research-based materials, *Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library*, is to enlist parents and caregivers as partners in preparing their children for learning to read and to provide the most effective methods to achieve this end. Whitehurst and Lonigan have created a unique structure for the distinctive phases of a young child's emergent literacy – early talkers, talkers and pre-readers.

Evaluations prove public libraries can effectively convey research in early literacy to parents and caregivers

To broaden the dissemination of these materials and to test their effectiveness, PLA and ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children) formed a partnership to pilot these materials in public libraries across the country. Demonstration sites were selected, representing a wide range of library size and demographics. Those sites tested the materials on a wide range of audiences within the library and the community. They used an evaluation method created by Dr. Virginia Walter, past president of ALSC and professor at UCLA, and refined by Sara Laughlin and Associates. The evaluation includes standard output measures and pioneers an interview method for assessing the outcomes achieved in using the materials and methods. Parent/caregiver evaluations are specific to each of the three developmental stages of reading readiness and are designed to show whether parents incorporated needed skill-building activities into their time with their preschool children.

Indeed, the evaluation shows that the information contained in these programs was incorporated into the behaviors of parents - helping them be more effective "first teachers" with their children, and increasing the public library's impact in early literacy development with children. Results of the evaluation are available at: [www.ala.org/ala/pla/plaissues/earlylit/researchandeval/projectevaluation.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/pla/plaissues/earlylit/researchandeval/projectevaluation.htm).

Libraries + parents and caregivers of preschoolers = children ready to read and ready to be successful in school

The library is increasingly becoming a driving force in the community and a strong partner in the educational continuum by linking activities to relevant research and evaluation. Public librarians must agree to partner with the young child's most important teachers – parents and caregivers – and to leverage our work in influencing a child's development. We believe that these model programs will allow all libraries to be more productive and influential in our communities.

Elaine Meyers is Head of Children's and Teen Services at the Burton Barr Central Library, Phoenix Public Library, in Phoenix, Arizona. Harriet Henderson is Director of Montgomery County Public Libraries in Montgomery County, Maryland.

For more information about *Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library*, visit [www.ala.org/ala/pla/plaissues/earlylit/](http://www.ala.org/ala/pla/plaissues/earlylit/).

## *Building a New Generation of Readers Libraries*

*Alice Woods/Sunizona Library*  
*Apache Junction Public Library*  
*Avondale Public Library*  
*Chandler Public Library*  
*Coolidge Public Library*  
*Flagstaff-Coconino County Public Library—Main, East*  
*Gila County Library District —Globe, Hayden, Isabelle Hunt, Miami, Payson, San Carlos, Tonto Basin, Young*  
*Glendale Public Library—Main, Foothills, Velma Teague*  
*Maricopa County Library District—Gila Bend, Guadalupe, Queen Creek*  
*Navajo County Library District—Cibecue, McNary, Whiteriver*

*Parker Public Library*  
*Patagonia School Districts Library*  
*Phoenix Public Library*  
*Rim Community Library*  
*Safford City—Graham County Library*  
*Scottsdale Public Library—Civic Center, Mustang*  
*Sedona Public Library*  
*Superior Public Library*  
*Tempe Public Library—Main, Escalante Center*  
*Tuba City Public Library*